

## **SAMPLE SYLLABI**

# **HUMAN NATURE AND SOVEREIGNTY**

PHIL 182 - Fall 2018 - Loyola University Chicago

Instructor: Kieran Aarons  
Office: Crown Center 334F  
Office Hours: 10:30am & by appointment

Course Location: Cuneo 218,  
Course Time: MWF 9:20-10:10  
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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to social and political philosophy. Our principal focus will be on the relation between sovereignty and human nature. In the course of pursuing this question, we will also confront issues related to political freedom, subjection, morality, violence, and identity.

A few of the questions we will be reflecting upon are:

- What relation is there between theories of nature and existence (cosmology/metaphysics) and theories of human nature? Or, between theories of human nature and political life?
- How have ideas about human nature either enabled or contested dominant political regimes throughout history?
- How have ideas of race, gender, and social superiority been constructed on the basis of conceptions of human nature? What part has philosophy played in the construction of these ideas? For example, what role did philosophical conceptions of human nature play in the justification and execution of institutionalized slavery? How were these notions formulated, elaborated, and executed by the powers that be? How do they become contested, when they are, and on what grounds?

- What does it mean for a social or political institution to be “natural”? What changes when we approach the same institution from an historical point of view?
- If some of our most fundamental assumptions about freedom, rights, property, and political life are themselves caught up in institutional categories emerging from slavery, racism and gender discrimination, what consequences does this have on our thoughts about these questions today?

Rather than posing such questions in a contextual vacuum, we will focus our attention on a set of precisely historically dated moments in the history of the West. We will address institutional slavery, colonialism, manhunts, the construction of race in the Americas, and the inception of the modern prison system.

## READING SCHEDULE

All readings are available in PDF through *sakai.luc.edu*. You are required to print them out, read and annotate them, and bring them to class with you on the day they are assigned

<b>I. HUMAN NATURE IN THE GREEK <i>POLIS</i></b>		
<b>WEEK 1</b>		
8.27	Introductions	
8.29	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Bk. 1	
8.31	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Bk. 1 (cont'd)	
<b>II. ARISTOTLE IN THE AMERICAS</b>		
<b>WEEK 2</b>		
9.03	Labor day – NO CLASS	
9.05	Las Casas, <i>The Devastation of the Indies</i> (selections)	[9.4 is the last day to add]
9.07	Las Casas, <i>In Defense of the Indians</i> (pg. 9-53)	
<b>WEEK 3</b>		
9.10	Las Casas, <i>In Defense of the Indians</i> (cont'd) Enzensberger, “Las Casas, or, A Look Back Into the Future”	
9.12	Zinn, <i>A Peoples History</i> , Ch.1 “Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress”;	
9.14	Zinn, Ch.1 (Cont'd).	
<b>III. PROPERTY, PATRIARCHY, &amp; THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN WORKING CLASS</b>		
<b>WEEK 4</b>		
9.17	Locke, <i>Second Treatise on Government</i> Ch. 5, “Property”	
9.19	Chamayou, <i>Manhunts</i> , Ch. 7, “Hunting the Poor”; Federici, “All the World Needs a Jolt. Social Movements and Political Crisis in Medieval Europe”	
9.21	Zinn, <i>A Peoples History</i> , Ch.3, “Persons of Mean and Vile Condition”	<i>First Paper Due 9.23 at 11pm</i>

<b>IV. INDIVIDUALISM, THE SOCIAL CONTRACT AND THE MODERN STATE FORM</b>		
<b>WEEK 5</b>		
9.24	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Dedicatory Letter, Introduction) [Recommended: <i>Leviathan</i> , Ch. 1-5]	
9.26	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Ch. 6, 13-15)	
9.28	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Ch. 6, 13-15) (Cont'd)	
<b>WEEK 6</b>		
10.01	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Ch. 17-18)	
10.03	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Ch. 21)	
10.05	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Ch. 29)	
<b>V. CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS</b>		
<b>WEEK 7</b>		
10.08	Mid-semester Break – NO CLASS	
10.10	Arendt, “The Perplexities of the Rights of Man”	
10.12	Arendt, “Perplexities” (Cont'd);	
<b>WEEK 8</b>		
10.15	Agamben, “Beyond Human Rights”;	
10.17	Agamben, “The State of Exception”; “What is a Camp?”	
10.19	Rancière, “Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?”	
<b>WEEK 9</b>		<i>Second Paper Due 10.20, 11pm</i>
10.22	Spade, <i>Normal Life</i> , Ch. 2, “What’s Wrong With Rights?” Ch. 4, “Administrating Gender”	
<b>VI. HUMAN NATURE AS A ‘PLASTIC PRINCIPLE’: THE NIETZSCHEAN CHALLENGE</b>		
10.24	Nietzsche – Selections from <i>The Gay Science</i>	
10.26	Nietzsche – <i>Genealogy of Morals</i> , First Essay; <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> , “Despisers of the Body”	
<b>WEEK 10</b>		
10.29	Nietzsche – <i>Genealogy of Morals</i> , Second Essay (sections 1-15);	
10.31	Nietzsche – <i>Genealogy</i> , Second Essay (remainder), Third Essay, (§27-28);	<i>[11.01: Last day to withdraw with a W grade]</i>
11.02	<i>The Antichrist</i> (selections).	
<b>WEEK 11</b>		
11.05	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , “The Body of the Condemned”	

11.07	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , “Docile Bodies”	
11.09	Foucault, “Docile Bodies” (Cont’d.)	
<b>WEEK 12</b>		
11.12	Foucault, “ <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , “The Means of Correct Training”	
11.14	Foucault, “ <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , “Panopticism”	
11.16	Foucault, “Panopticism” (Cont’d)	
<b>VII. CRITICAL RACE THEORY, BLACK FEMINISM, AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY</b>		
<b>WEEK 13</b>		
11.19	Zinn, <i>A Peoples’ History</i> , Ch. 2 “Drawing the Color Line” We Charge Genocide, “U.N. Shadow Report”	
11.21	<i>NO CLASS</i> (Thanksgiving)	
11.23	<i>NO CLASS</i> (Thanksgiving)	
<b>WEEK 14</b>		
11.26	Martinot, “Motherhood and the Invention of Race”	
11.28	Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”; Moten, “Mike Brown”	
11.30	Moten and Harney, <i>The Undercommons</i> (selections); Film: <i>Caminando hacia la autonomia</i> [Walking Towards Autonomy] (2015)	
<b>WEEK 15</b>		
12.03	Moten and Harney, <i>The Undercommons</i> (Cont’d)	
12.05	(Anonymous), <i>The Call</i>	
12.07	Conclusions; Final paper workshop	

***FINAL PAPER DUE Sat Dec. 15, 3pm via Dropbox***